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First Committee

10th meeting

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Official Records

President: Mr. Choi (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before proceeding with our work, allow me to remind all delegations briefly that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions is today at 6 p.m. I would also like to stress that delegations should ensure that the content of their submissions is accurate, so that the documentation procedures can be carried out in a timely and efficient manner.

Let us now begin our thematic discussion on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction and outer space. As members will recall, we already heard the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Pfirter, on Monday, and we have no further guest speakers scheduled for this meeting. I will, therefore, give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subjects.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and

potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

As we set out in our general statement, the EU supports and promotes the universal ratification of and adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). These treaties have an essential role in countering the threat of chemical and biological weapons, and, together with other key multilateral agreements, provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, which contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism.

We, therefore, take this opportunity to urge States who are not parties to them to adhere to these treaties and join the mainstream. The EU will continue, in its relations with third countries, to stress the importance of these treaties and promote universal adherence. And we will continue to urge all those States who are parties to the treaties to take all necessary steps to implement their obligations under both these treaties and United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), including in relation to enacting penal legislation. The EU stands ready to assist when requested to do so.

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The Union is continuing to pursue its Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, which was adopted in December 2003. Since then, we have identified concrete actions aimed at promoting and reinforcing the CWC and the BTWC. We will continue to seek practical ways to pursue the implementation of this Strategy. We are also committed to implementing the EU's Common Position on the universalization and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery.

The European Union believes that the control of emerging technology will continue to be an issue of considerable concern in the area of chemical and biological weapons. The potential for illicit use of such technologies has been specifically mentioned in scientific literature and highlights the need to monitor technological developments, in respect of emerging processes and related equipment, with potential use in chemical and biological weapons programmes. We intend to be active in this area.

The EU underlines the relevance also of the Group of Eight (G-8) Partnership Initiatives, including the employment of weapons scientists, for the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) disarmament and non-proliferation process.

The EU acknowledges the progress made towards the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We are equally supportive of the organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and of compliance with its demands, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). In November 2004, EU member States agreed on a Joint Action in support of the activities of the OPCW. This is currently being implemented. It is providing financial support to the Organisation in the areas of universality, national implementation and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities. We hope to renew this successful Joint Action and provide further financial support for the OPCW's activities in 2006.

The European Union believes that the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention must be strictly applied. One of the most important features of the Convention is the obligation for possessors of chemical weapons to destroy their stockpiles by specified deadlines. We continue to urge the possessors to take

every possible step to meet these deadlines. In supporting this aim, the European Union has provided assistance to Russia.

The European Union believes that verification and, in particular, the mechanism of challenge inspections, is an essential means of deterring non-compliance with the Convention and increasing transparency, confidence and international security. We are, therefore, promoting the instrument of challenge inspection and, to that end, we have agreed on an EU Plan of Action, which was shared with States parties at the end of 2004. We encourage other States parties to participate actively in this exercise. Furthermore, in that context, we believe that the Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct a challenge inspection, and we support the efforts being made by it to maintain readiness.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is now 30 years old. It remains as relevant today as ever and is the cornerstone of our efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from being developed as weapons. Since 2002, we have been engaged in a very useful follow-up process. It has led us to address, in a successful manner, the issues of the adoption of necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of national legislation; national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins; the enhancement of international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of the alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease; the strengthening and broadening of national and institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious disease affecting humans, animals and plants; and, most recently, the content, promulgation and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists.

We intend to assess the efficiency of this intersessional process with a view to its further employment in the future after 2006. We intend to play an active role in the Review Conference scheduled for 2006. We believe that it is important that States parties agree on a substantive outcome at that Conference so as to strengthen the Convention and build a sound basis for future work. The European Union reaffirms its commitment to developing measures to verify compliance with the Convention.

To implement its strategy against the proliferation of WMDs in the field of biological weapons, the European Union is focusing on practical measures — in particular universality and national implementation — with the aim of agreeing on a joint action. We also believe that the annual exchange on confidence-building measures is important and needs to be revitalized. We are working internally to improve our own record in that regard.

The European Union continues to support the Secretary-General's mechanism to investigate the alleged use of chemical, biological and toxin weapons, endorsed at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in 1990. EU member States will consider and volunteer expertise to the Secretary-General to help update the lists of experts and laboratories that he may call upon for an investigation. Furthermore, we believe that the mechanism — which is now 15 years old — needs to be reviewed and updated so that it can take advantage of the progress of science and investigation in the intervening years and support efforts to make progress in that regard.

In addressing the problem of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, the EU supports the Hague Code of Conduct, which, since its inception in November 2002, has become an important transparency and confidence-building instrument and a practical contribution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We are deeply convinced that the Hague Code of Conduct constitutes one of the most concrete initiatives in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles. That includes the right of every State to reap the benefits of the peaceful uses of space. One hundred twenty-one countries have now subscribed to the Code, and more countries are seriously considering taking that step soon. It is an initial but essential step to effectively address the problem of missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective without precluding other initiatives or, in the longer term, more comprehensive approaches.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): My brief intervention will be on the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).

We welcome the report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Rogelio Pfrter, that the six possessors of

chemical weapons continue to destroy their declared stockpiles and that the process of securing stockpiles and verification of destruction is moving apace. We have also taken note of the Director-General's statement that the lion's share of the task lies ahead and that major challenges remain. It is a matter of concern that the destruction of chemical-weapons stockpiles by main possessors is falling behind schedule. Obviously, the pace of the verified destruction of declared stockpiles should be accelerated.

We must also work on reducing the risk of the proliferation of chemical weapons and of possible access to such weapons by non-State actors or terrorists. In that context, the speedy and complete destruction of chemical-weapon stockpiles is critical. The OPCW Director-General has rightly pointed out that the know-how to produce simple chemical weapons is widely available and that the financial and technical hurdles in that regard are much less problematic.

We commend the efforts being made with regard to the plan of action on the implementation of article-VII obligations. In that regard, practical difficulties and resource constraints faced by the developing countries must be factored in. The provision of assistance and technical support to States parties upon request will help to expedite implementation of the plan of action. Such implementation is an ongoing process based on a cooperative approach. We would welcome and encourage the allocation of appropriate resources from the regular budget of the OPCW, in addition to voluntary contributions. The chemical-weapons prohibition regime overseen by the OPCW is a manifestation of the success of multilateralism. That example can be replicated in other areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

For its part, Pakistan has faithfully complied with all the provisions of the CWC and is committed to further strengthening the objectives and purposes of the Convention. We attach importance to universal adherence to the Convention by all States. Implementation of the CWC should be carried out in such a way that chemical and technological activities and capabilities of States parties not prohibited by the Convention are not adversely affected. International cooperation in economic and scientific fields should continue to be expanded.

Concerning the BTWC, we should not lose hope or abandon efforts to strengthen international cooperation to ensure compliance and verification. In fact, we should make renewed efforts that can help ensure compliance and verification by all Member States. We should also try to build bridges and develop collective strategies to prevent the acquisition or proliferation of biological weapons. A productive endeavour is under way to develop appropriate codes of conduct as well as self-discipline on the part of industry and scientific and medical establishments and institutions. In order to use the full potential of biosciences, we must act responsibly while preserving the space necessary for research and industrial applications.

We also need to develop a long-term perspective. We should untangle ourselves from past wrangles and look towards the 2006 Review Conference and five to 10 years beyond it. The pace of change in the biosciences is phenomenal. Therefore, we need a long-term perspective in order to develop an international paradigm that would allow the fullest cooperation among nations to prevent proliferation and to harness biosciences for the service of humanity.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to speak of the issue of outer space. At 9 a.m. Beijing time today, China successfully launched a manned spaceship: Shenzhou VI. China's scientific outer space flight testing and research is completely for peaceful purposes and is a contribution to scientific progress and peace for humankind. We would like to join our efforts with those of all the world's peoples to advance together in the peaceful use of outer space.

Like land, sea and air, outer space has become an inseparable part of human life. Progress and development in various fields of human society, including the economy, culture, technology and others, are closely linked with the peaceful use of outer space. Outer space systems play a vital role in many important areas, such as telecommunications, navigation, meteorology and remote sensing.

Especially in recent years, such natural disasters as tsunamis and typhoons have brought so much tragedy to humankind, and the international community has paid increasing attention to the role of outer space in catastrophe early warning systems, and has strengthened international cooperation in the exchange of information.

At the same time, history has shown that the development of science and technology, if not properly guided, can itself bring disaster to human beings. If used to seek military superiority or to wage war, advanced space technology will seriously endanger peace and security in outer space and jeopardize the happiness and welfare of mankind. Unfortunately, some trends in outer space indicate that such a possibility exists. Currently, certain concepts and theories of warfare, such as those calling for control over or occupation of outer space, are being codified. Research and development for space weapons is also being carried out. Thus, the danger of the weaponization of outer space is becoming ever more imminent.

Outer space is the common heritage of all mankind. Space assets should be used to promote rather than undermine the peace, welfare and development of the world. It is both the right and the obligation of all countries to ensure the peaceful use of outer space and to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. We must not wait until outer space weapons are developed and begin to cause damage. It would be too late if one country takes the lead in introducing weapons into outer space, with other States following suit. It is urgent that everything necessary be done to prevent the proliferation of space weapons. The key is to take preventive measures. Otherwise, the right to the peaceful use of outer space and the safety of outer space assets will be put in jeopardy.

Over the years, the international community has endeavoured on many fronts to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. The Conference on Disarmament at Geneva had established an ad hoc committee to discuss outer space issues, and it functioned for 10 years, from 1985 to 1994. For many consecutive years, the General Assembly has overwhelmingly adopted a resolution on prevention of an arms race in outer space. Many Governments, civil society groups and academic institutes have put forward numerous constructive proposals. We appreciate those efforts, and we appeal to all countries to join the process in order to contribute to the security of outer space.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that, as the body mandated by the United Nations to take charge of negotiations on disarmament and arms control treaties, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the best

venue for negotiating and concluding a legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space. We urge the Conference to start substantive work at an early date.

In 2002, China and Russia, along with Belarus, Indonesia, Syria, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe submitted to the Conference on Disarmament a working paper entitled "Possible elements for a future international legal agreement on the prevention of the deployment of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (CD/1679). Subsequently, China and Russia jointly distributed three thematic non-papers. It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament can use those documents as a basis for negotiating and concluding a new legal instrument on outer space.

Humankind has entered a new century. Peace, development and cooperation have become the trend of our times. Early conclusion of an international legal instrument to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space will contribute to the peaceful use of outer space, protect the safety of space assets, facilitate international cooperation in this field and enhance the common security of all countries. Let us join our efforts to maintain a peaceful and serene outer space, free of weapons and warfare.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): My statement will be on the theme of other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Russia calls for strengthening the multilateral foundations of WMD disarmament and non-proliferation on the basis of strict compliance with international agreements in that area. Together with the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which we discussed yesterday, we attach great importance to the unconditional implementation by all States of their commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC).

The need for effective action on the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons is so topical and urgent today because we live with the threat that such weapons might fall into the hands of terrorists: a new and exceedingly dangerous dimension of an old problem.

In our view, the main task of the CWC is eliminating current supplies of toxic substances by the deadlines that have been set. Here, we are fulfilling our

obligations. In 2002 we began to destroy Russian chemical weapons stocks at the Gorny facility. To date, we have eliminated approximately 1,000 metric tons of toxic substances. With a view to the timely implementation of the second phase of destruction, to be completed late 2005 or early 2006, we have commissioned destruction sites in Kambarka in the Udmurt Republic and at Maradykovsky in the Kirov region, and those facilities are now under construction. Based on the tremendous scale of our obligations we are increasing financing in the national budget for the federal chemical weapons destruction programme.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the countries that have given us financial assistance for the elimination of chemical arsenals. Russia is currently receiving financial and technical assistance from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada, the Czech Republic, the European Union and New Zealand. With external assistance, we are now building three of the six projected chemical weapons destruction facilities. In that connection, we should note that today we face the serious problem of how to increase the effectiveness of that assistance. Since cooperation began, we have received only approximately 9 per cent of the assistance pledged. We would especially like to call attention to the major assistance that we will need for the period 2005-2007, when we will be actively constructing new destruction facilities.

To ensure the non-proliferation of chemical weapons, we believe that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague needs to make the universality of the Convention a high priority. The number of parties to the Convention is growing steadily, as we heard from Mr. Pfirter, Director-General of the OPCW, in his statement to the Committee a few days ago. However, a number of States, including States from dangerous conflict zones, still remain outside the OPCW framework. Implementation of the OPCW action plan to universalize the Convention would play a significant role in increasing the number of States parties. We are convinced that the national implementation measures that all member States are bound to undertake are a necessary ingredient for ensuring the Treaty's stability. Implementing the action plan would also help us to revitalize work in this area.

We are prepared to provide assistance to other States to develop national legislation and to share our experiences. We are already cooperating in this area within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In addition, we welcome Poland's initiative to submit draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.31 in support of the Treaty.

In the context of non-proliferation and disarmament efforts, we have consistently called for the strengthening of the BTWC. Above all, we believe that the most effective way to achieve that aim would be to conclude a verification mechanism for the BTWC through a legally binding document or protocol that would make it possible to verify that all States parties are meeting their commitments under the Convention. That is still possible today. If consensus cannot be reached on the matter, we would then support the decision of the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the BTWC, which called for convening annual meetings of States parties to the Convention and expert meetings to consider establishing a verification mechanism to assist compliance. We believe that such forums could be more successful, enabling us to adopt documents setting out general principles and approaches worked out in our discussions. We believe that in the meetings held from 2003 to 2005, we succeeded in establishing a good basis for the success of a sixth BTWC review conference, to be held in 2006.

Obviously, the universalization of the BTWC would be an important step towards preventing the spread of biological weapons. We call on those States that have not yet become parties to do so. We have consistently held that all States parties to the Convention should fully align their national legislation with its provisions. We support the draft resolution on the Convention (A/C.1/60/L.33) proposed by Hungary.

Over the past year, the international community, with the participation of the United Nations, was able to make progress in reducing the threat of proliferation and the danger of weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. First and foremost, we are referring to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). That resolution establishes a genuine basis for countering the black market in WMDs, which is one of the most likely channels through which terrorists can gain access to dangerous components for WMDs.

At the proper time, we shall make a statement on the disarmament aspects of the militarization of outer space.

Mr. Trezza (Italy): Italy fully supports and associates itself with the statement made by the delegation of the United Kingdom on behalf of the presidency of the European Union (EU). The EU presidency represents us so well and so fully that it is difficult for us to find anything we would like to add. That is why this is just the first time, after 10 days of proceedings, that I am making a statement in the First Committee.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election. I know that you are exercising a supranational position right now, but let me recall the very friendly relationship between our two countries and Italy's full commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in the Korean peninsula.

The object of today's meeting is, *inter alia*, discussion of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in general. This is, I believe, the appropriate time to make some remarks on WMDs and also some more general remarks. I wish to express our appreciation for the fact that an invitation was extended to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Pfirter, to address the Committee. Incidentally, Ambassador Pfirter visited Rome last week, where he participated in a ceremony and a seminar to mark the tenth anniversary of Italy's ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). I was also happy to listen to Ambassador Tibor Tóth, my former Hungarian colleague in Geneva, who is now the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) Organization. Other officials representing other disarmament forums will address the Committee in coming days.

I take this opportunity to underscore the importance we attach to the presence here in New York, at the appropriate time, of those who have institutional responsibilities in the implementation of the main disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. This is also the moment to highlight the fact that the main WMD treaties would be less meaningful if they lacked appropriate mechanisms for their implementation and possibly for their verification and compliance.

The nature of the existing mechanisms varies. Some conventions, such as the CWC, have a full organization to implement and verify their provisions. The same goes for the CTBT, which has a preparatory structure, pending the entry into force of the Treaty. We hope that this will become a permanent structure as soon as possible.

Other treaties are not so fortunate, if I may put it that way. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has to rely for its implementation on a five-yearly review process. We are in favour of strengthening that process. The NPT, however, can avail itself of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the verification of some of its commitments. It is unnecessary to stress yet again how much Italy, together with its EU partners, supports the IAEA safeguards agreements and the additional protocols. The fact that the Nobel Peace Prize was given this year to the IAEA and its Director General is an important recognition of the role played by the Agency worldwide.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) too has to rely on a five-yearly review process, which we support, and we are working to ensure concrete outcomes for the annual meetings in preparation for the sixth Review Conference, to be held in 2006. We continue to support the principle of verification of the BTWC.

In conclusion, we wish to draw the attention of the First Committee to the vital importance of the follow-up and implementation processes of disarmament and non-proliferation engagements and to the necessity for the First Committee to be regularly briefed by the responsible officials on the evolution of this process.

As a final remark, let me add that we would be very happy if we could also have, in the not-too-distant future, a representative of a fissile material cut-off treaty follow-up structure brief us here in New York. This is not a reality yet, but the negotiation of such a treaty is a priority for us. We believe that it is feasible and are working to make it a reality as soon as possible.

Mr. Berry (Canada): The global community, both spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations, draws ever-increasing benefits from space assets. These benefits range from communications to search-and-rescue to navigation and weather forecasting capabilities

unimaginable to previous generations. Many would be shocked to discover the extent of the impact upon our daily lives if there were ever a large-scale interruption in satellite services. Space assets also play an important role in sustaining strategic stability. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all nations have a stake in protecting space assets and the benefits they provide.

In this light, Canada believes strongly that all nations also share a stake and a responsibility in ensuring that human actions do not jeopardize the current and future benefits offered to us by outer space. This is the common starting point from which Member States have built their endeavours in outer space and the point from which we should not sway. Canada has long advocated a ban on space-based weapons as a means to fulfilling a greater end, namely that of ensuring secure and sustainable access to and use of space for peaceful purposes. Space and the benefits it provides across a wide range of sectors represent an increasingly valuable resource that is too precious to leave unprotected by universally respected international law.

At the General Assembly in 2004, Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin said,

"What a tragedy it would be if space became one big weapons arsenal and the scene of a new arms race. In 1967, the United Nations agreed that weapons of mass destruction must not be based in space. The time has come to extend that ban to all weapons". (*A/59/PV.5, p. 32*)

A legal instrument to give effect to such a comprehensive ban should be negotiated without delay. A space weapons ban has of course long been a subject of discussion in the Conference on Disarmament, and Canada is committed to seeing the Conference re-establish an ad hoc committee to consider the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Canada thinks it is time for the international community to organize itself to ensure substantive multilateral consideration of this and other measures that could be taken to enhance outer space security. Progress in this regard will be facilitated by discussions that have already taken place.

Among the specific and detailed elements of a space weapons ban that have been explored here in the First Committee, in the Conference on Disarmament and elsewhere are such topics as definitions,

transparency, entry into force and verification. At the same time, Canada appreciates that measures other than a weaponization ban can also enhance space security and that the broad range of elements included in a space security concept can be addressed in many different forums. States might usefully, for example, wish to explore various approaches to confidence-building in this area. Constructive ideas that have been advanced include proposals for no-first-deployment pledges, codes of conduct for space activity and expanded commitments of non-interference with space-based national technical means, building on existing provisions found in accords such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Such ideas seem to us worth considering. Proposals of this kind can also serve to foster a political-diplomatic environment of mutual confidence, one conducive to the negotiation of a multilateral agreement on prevention of an arms race in outer space, which, to be effective, would require support from key spacefaring nations, and especially those with a space launch capability.

Concrete steps have already been taken. Last October, the Russian Federation was the first country to pledge that it would not be the first to deploy weapons of any kind in space. A no-first-deployment pledge has since also been made by the participants in the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

If adopted widely, such declarations could help build confidence that no nation will station weapons in space. The Hague Code of Conduct also makes an important contribution to confidence-building, as its 122 subscribers agree to inform each other of space launches through pre-launch notifications. Another step available to all States is to accede to the Outer Space Treaty, and Canada encourages all those that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty before its fortieth anniversary in 2007.

Canada would welcome the opportunity to share ideas and learn from others regarding how we, as nations and as members of the international community, can best ensure that space remains free for peaceful use in the future. On a national basis, there are many different ways to reinforce space security through the protection of space assets. For example, better protecting ground stations, introducing redundancy within satellite systems and building a replenishment capacity could all contribute in that regard.

Canada encourages enhanced cooperation among United Nations bodies, from a dialogue between the First and Fourth Committees on their space-related work, to exchanges between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament. Working more closely together would highlight the commonality of interests and the need for practical steps to prevent the weaponization of outer space.

We have a duty to ourselves and to future generations to ensure secure and sustainable access to and use of space for peaceful purposes. Given recent technological developments, the possibility that space weapons could be deployed looms ever closer. We can now therefore gain much by investing our energies in ensuring space security through developing a comprehensive multilateral architecture for a weapon-free outer space. In that way, we will be able to ensure that future generations are able, as we are today, to invest their energies not in developing and deploying space-based weapons but, rather, in exploring and using outer space for peaceful purposes, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries and of all humankind.

We share those views in a spirit of cooperation, and look forward to hearing the views of others.

Mr. Gala López (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba continues firmly to call for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. Together with the Non-Aligned Movement, Cuba has always accorded the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. By contrast, certain States are continuing to bring pressure to bear to ensure that the international community's attention is focused increasingly on horizontal proliferation, to the detriment to nuclear disarmament, notwithstanding the fact that there are still tens of thousands of such weapons that jeopardize humankind's very existence.

We believe that the issue of proliferation in all its aspects must be resolved by political and diplomatic means, within the framework of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate that the only safe and effective way to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is to achieve their total elimination. The imposition of mechanisms that have a selective composition, lack transparency and function on the periphery of the United Nations and of international treaties is in no

way an adequate response to the phenomenon of international terrorism, including terrorism linked to the use of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems or related materials.

Cuba is in favour of a strengthened international coalition of all States aimed at preventing the acquisition by terrorists of such weapons and their delivery systems. But such an effort must be carried out through international cooperation in the framework of the Organization and relevant international treaties. Such efforts must be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law.

The only way of guaranteeing that weapons of mass destruction do not fall into the hands of non-State actors is to ensure the prohibition and total elimination of all such weapons.

Yesterday, a number of points were made with regard to nuclear weapons, and I would like to make a few additional comments in that respect. In this context, we consider the development of new kinds of nuclear weapons, as well as the existence of strategic defence doctrines based on the possession and use of such weapons, to constitute a danger to international peace and security. We will be able to prevent the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons as a result of the application of such doctrines — and correct the flaws in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — only when we negotiate a multilateral convention that takes a comprehensive approach to disarmament, verification, assistance and cooperation with a view to attaining the objective of nuclear disarmament.

Commitments already entered into must be fully complied with, including the 13 practical steps agreed upon in 2000 at the sixth NPT Review Conference. At the seventh Review Conference, held this year, it became clear that certain nuclear Powers still lack the necessary political will to attain the objective of eliminating and forever prohibiting nuclear weapons. We cannot allow the foot-dragging to continue with regard to the launching of multilateral negotiations to conclude a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument by which the nuclear-weapon States would commit themselves not to threaten or use such weapons against States that do not possess them.

The holding in Mexico of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones was a momentous

achievement. Cuba participated in an active and constructive manner both in the preparatory process for that important conference and during the deliberations.

That further demonstrates clearly that the Cuban Government is continuing to take concrete actions that demonstrate its firm commitment to multilateralism and its political will to comply with all of its obligations as a State party to the NPT and to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The most effective and sustainable way of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a legally binding international instrument that allows for the verification of compliance with all its provisions. The tendency of certain developed countries to try to give the specialized agencies of the United Nations system functions and prerogatives in the area of verifying compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention that fall outside their mandates and functions is a cause for concern. We reiterate that primary responsibility in that field is incumbent upon States parties to the Convention and that the role to be played by the aforementioned organizations must be strictly confined to their respective mandates and spheres of competence.

Cuba continues to comply with its obligations as a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention. We have expeditiously provided information in response to the questionnaire on confidence-building measures related to the Convention.

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we feel that the consideration of compliance with its provisions must be guided by a comprehensive approach and that discussion must appropriately reflect issues related to the effective implementation of article XI on assistance and cooperation in the peaceful use of chemical agents, equipment and technology. Cuba is in full national compliance with the Action Plan on the Implementation of Article VII Obligations.

We reiterate that there must be concrete ways of providing assistance and cooperation to promote and effectuate the peaceful use of nuclear, chemical and biological agents, materials, technology and equipment, in particular in order to promote the social and economic development of developing countries.

In conclusion, I would point out that we warmly welcomed the statement made by the representative of China, and wish to congratulate his delegation in particular on the progress his country has made in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. MacLachlan (Australia): Australia has long supported multilateral efforts to eliminate chemical and biological weapons and their production. Australia strongly supports the implementation and universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which we regard as fundamental to the international norms against those weapons.

Regrettably, the lesson of experience is that there are States that will either resist subscribing to those treaties or, having done so, will subvert their aims. For that reason, Australia also strongly supports practical initiatives and measures that reinforce the global norms against weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons.

One important practical initiative, the Australia Group, marks its twentieth anniversary this year. Australia convened the first meeting of 15 nations in Brussels in response to Iraq's use of chemical weapons in its war with Iran. The 15 participants sought to prevent Saddam Hussein's Iraq from acquiring materials to build chemical weapons through otherwise legitimate commercial trade. Their response — harmonized national export controls — led to the Australia Group's birth.

At the Australia Group plenary held in Sydney earlier this year, participants focused on key issues, including terrorism. They agreed to significant measures to strengthen the Group. Of note were refinements to export control lists, including the addition of specific aerosol sprayers suitable for dispersal of biological agents. That was a direct response to terrorist interest in such agents and devices. The Group also agreed to continue engaging non-participants, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, the western Balkans and key transshipment countries, to promote more robust export control standards, as required under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Australia Group participants remained firmly committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Their efforts to prevent the diversion of key chemicals,

biological agents and dual-use equipment to the production and proliferation of chemical and biological weapons reinforce those vital treaties, which are yet to achieve universal and fully effective implementation. Encouragingly, there is a growing acceptance among non-participants of Australia Group measures as an international benchmark for effective export control.

Australia is committed to remaining at the forefront in promoting the value and effectiveness of practical initiatives and measures, such as the Australia Group, the Proliferation Security Initiative and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which reinforce international peace and security.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): During the general debate, my statement referred to Sri Lanka's long-abiding interest in the issues of outer space, grounded in our early active involvement in the negotiations in the United Nations of the laws of the sea and of outer space, defining the common heritage of humankind.

A number of treaties and agreements have been concluded over the years to protect assets in space, of which the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies remains the most important. At the time of its conclusion in the early years of space exploration, only a very few nations had the ability to have their own space programmes. The situation today is quite different, with over 130 countries involved in some space programme and about 30 having launch capability. In addition, space technologies are particularly important for developing countries, impacting on critical areas, such as communications, education, health and environment, food security and disaster management.

We all have a stake in space security today. As the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Outer Space Treaty approaches, we would urge Member States to work towards universalizing the Treaty, which currently has 98 States parties. We need to continue to work together to examine present and future threats and to keep outer space peaceful, using the full potential of the multilateral forums of both the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish now to make a national statement on aspects of disarmament in outer space.

Preventing an arms race in outer space is a priority issue for the Russian Federation. It is a major and urgent problem. Once again this year, we have co-sponsored a draft resolution on preventing an arms race in outer space, the urgency of which is not only not abating, but is, on the contrary, increasing. The deployment of weapons in outer space is a major and genuine threat, the consequences of which would be multiple. Hopes to dominate outer space through the use of force are illusory. Such a desire would weaken, rather than strengthen, security for all States without exception.

Now is the time, while there is a practical opportunity to do so, to achieve security in space objects, which have a great impact on our daily lives, with the help of preventive, non-military means. One such means is to close the loopholes in current international space law in order to achieve a new and comprehensive international legal agreement that would hinder opportunities to deploy any type of weapon in space and to use or threaten force with respect to space objects.

We are sure that such an agreement on the non-weaponization of space would be in the interests of all and naturally, first and foremost, in the interests of States which have space programmes. There are now about 130 such States. For this reason, we have consistently advocated prompt agreement on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament, which has gained extensive experience on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. It could thus establish the relevant ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament and launch work on the matter.

In the interests of achieving a consensus on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament, Russia has stated that it is willing not to raise objections to the well-known compromise initiatives to create an ad hoc committee on this subject with a mandate merely to discuss rather than to negotiate. We are hoping for similar steps by other States towards that goal. We understand that with the establishment of an ad hoc committee, we would need to convince those who still express reservations about the advisability of a new agreement on prevention of an arms race in outer space that it is in fact urgent, achievable, and in everyone's interest. We are prepared to do this. The major parameters of our proposed new agreement on the non-weaponization of space are laid

out in document CD/1679, and its specific aspects are described in more detail in three thematic reports prepared jointly by Russia and China and distributed at the Conference.

Nothing in our proposal is cast in stone. It is an invitation to all interested States to work together to come up with a document acceptable to all. Therefore, in our view, even with a discussion mandate, the ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament would have interesting and intensive work to do, especially since we have heard many interesting ideas and proposals from Canada, France and a number of other States.

Sometimes we hear it said that States calling for developing a new international legal agreement on the non-weaponization of space are doing this for tactical purposes. Such claims do not comport with reality. Of course, the priority challenge of any State is to ensure its own security. If someone begins to deploy weapons in space, then of course we would be compelled to formulate an adequate response. However, creating space weapons is not a choice we make. We have already stated that neither today nor in the period to come does the Russian Federation have any plans to create or deploy any kind of weapons systems in outer space.

Russia has consistently adhered to the moratorium on testing of anti-satellite systems. In 2004, Russia said that it would not be the first to deploy any type of weapons in outer space. Weaponization of outer space is not, in our view, a foregone and unavoidable conclusion. We are completely capable of blocking deployment of weapons in outer space and guiding scientific and technological work and progress in creative directions. We were able to reach an agreement on banning chemical and biological weapons because we realized all of the disastrous consequences that their use would entail. We could also ban the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

There are no weapons in space at present. We are not proposing to ban or in any way limit the functioning in space of systems which carry out important auxiliary military functions — such as communications, surveillance, navigation, geodesy and meteorology — including for defence purposes. These space systems can play a stabilizing role, for example as a means of verifying compliance with arms

reduction or limitation agreements or ensuring the secure functioning of armed forces in peacetime.

In other words, nothing that is in space now would come under the limitations or bans. We would like to ban deployment in space of any type of offensive weapon. We have already proposed specific definitions of the terms "deployment" and "weapons".

Ensuring the security of space would be furthered with the development of transparency and confidence-building measures in our space activities. Such measures, important in and of themselves, could complement norms of international space law now in force and could be used to verify compliance with current and new treaties. The range of confidence-building measures which could be used by States, including on a voluntary basis, is broad. In October 1993, the Secretary-General issued a thorough report (A/48/305) on research on adoption of confidence-building measures in outer space, which contained an analysis of the potential of confidence-building measures. Many of its proposals are still current today, although in the 12 years that have elapsed since the research was done the world has, of course, not stood still.

Russia has already proactively taken a number of confidence-building measures in space and we hope that our example will be followed by other States which have their own space programmes. In particular, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs website now contains timely information on upcoming launches of spacecraft and on their purpose. We are grateful to those States which commended Russia's statement that we would not be the first to deploy any type of weapons in space. If all the leading space States took a similar policy initiative, we would be able to contribute significantly to reducing the motivation to weaponize space.

Once again, we call on all States which have space potential to follow our example. We are pleased to draw attention to the fact that on 23 June 2005, the leaders of States parties to the Collective Security Treaty Organization — Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan — made an official statement to the effect that those States would not be the first to put any kind of weapons in space.

Of course, developing confidence-building measures in space is no replacement for work on a legally binding document to prevent weapons deployment in space. Nor, however, does one

contradict the other. Logically, the first complements the second, and they both pursue a single aim, that of helping ensure security in space in order to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation of States in outer space and to avoid an arms race in space.

In the next segment of the thematic discussion on disarmament aspects of outer space, when draft resolutions will be introduced, the Russian delegation intends to submit a draft resolution on measures to promote transparency and confidence-building in outer space.

Mr. Park In-Kook (Republic of Korea): I will deliver a very brief version of my statement. My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons for his comprehensive briefing on his organization's achievements and development.

We are pleased to note that considerable progress has been made over the past year in implementing the objectives of the Convention, particularly regarding the enlargement of the membership and the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. However, the Convention is still far from universal. While we recognize the remarkable progress made in expanding the Convention's membership from 87 to 174 States parties since its entry into force in 1997, we are eager to see further expansion as rapidly as possible. I want to draw special attention to the fact that eight States have not yet signed or acceded to the Convention. My delegation fully supports any initiative by the OPCW to encourage those States to join the Convention.

Furthermore, universality is essential for coping with the increasing threat of the use of chemical weapons by terrorists and with other risks associated with the proliferation of dangerous chemical materials. In fact, in spite of the global efforts to fight terrorism, serious concerns remain about the potential nexus between terrorism and the illegal trade in hazardous chemical materials. In that regard, we appreciate the valuable contribution of the OPCW to implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as its ongoing contribution to the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

The spectre of the threats posed by biological weapons is further cause for serious concern. We believe that the successful outcome of the upcoming Sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons

Convention, to be held in 2006, is vital to ensure the prevention and the prohibition of biological weapons, combat their proliferation and strengthen the Convention's framework, including various confidence-building measures.

No State party to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) should use the lack of a verification protocol as justification for failing to take effective national-level measures. It is necessary to take concrete steps to translate the prohibition of the BWC into action through all legislative, administrative and regulatory means. Moreover, in order for the BWC to be a truly viable instrument, an assessment of developments affecting its objectives and operation must be periodically carried out.

Mr. Loedel (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries members of the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated States of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, with respect to the Biological Weapons Convention.

We reaffirm our countries' determined commitment to continue our progress towards attaining the objectives of the Convention, including international cooperation in the area of chemical activities for non-prohibited purposes.

MERCOSUR and its associated States value the work accomplished to date by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to attain the objectives of the Convention. Those efforts are reflected in the fact that 174 States have ratified the Convention. Also, we note that chemical arsenals have been reduced since the Convention's entry into force.

However, we reaffirm that the countries possessing chemical weapons or facilities for the production of such weapons have the obligation to destroy their arsenals and related facilities, in accordance with the deadlines established by the Convention. Any delay in destruction would impede the effective implementation of that international agreement.

MERCOSUR and its associated States call for intensified international cooperation with a view to achieving the economic and technological development of the States parties in the area of chemical activities for purposes not prohibited under the Convention,

including the international exchange of scientific and technological information, as well as of chemical substances, for purposes not prohibited under the Convention.

We believe that, with the support of States parties, cooperation must be intensified to develop legislation to establish the appropriate monitoring mechanisms. In that context, MERCOSUR and its associated States call on all States parties to the Convention to continue their efforts for effective implementation of the national measures envisaged in article VII of the Convention, in order to achieve greater cooperation among State parties and thus contribute to the achievement of joint action with the United Nations in fighting terrorism. Our subregion is of the view that the Convention is an effective tool in the fight against the proliferation of chemical weapons and dual-use substances and equipment. We reaffirm the need to improve border and customs controls to that end. In addition, we call for the reinforcement of the measures of assistance and protection against chemical weapons envisaged under article X of the Convention, in particular for cases of chemical attacks and accidents.

In conclusion, MERCOSUR and its associated States wish to place on record their satisfaction with the leadership of Ambassador Rogelio Pflirter, who is from our subregion and who, for the past four years, has held the office of Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

The Chairman: There are no further requests for the floor on the issue of other weapons of mass destruction and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We shall now proceed to the introduction of draft resolutions and decisions.

Mr. Paturej (Poland): It is an honour and a pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of Poland, draft resolution A/C.1/60/L.31, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) remains very timely this year. The text reflects the real progress made in the implementation of the CWC and in the work of the Organisation for the Prohibition of the Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at The Hague since the adoption of last year's resolution (*resolution 59/72*).

Therefore, the following new elements have been introduced in this year's draft resolution.

Special emphasis has been placed on maintaining the importance of the action plan on the implementation of article-VII obligations, or national implementation measures. The draft resolution welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the action plan. It urges States parties that have not fulfilled their obligations under article VII to do so without further delay. Moreover, the importance of the role of international cooperation and assistance has been confirmed. The draft resolution, for the first time, reaffirms the importance of article XI provisions relating to the economic and technological development of States parties and recalls that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of those provisions will contribute to universality.

Emphasis is placed on the role of the full and effective implementation of all provisions of the Convention, including the Convention's provisions on national implementation and assistance and protection against chemical weapons in the global fight against terrorism. The draft resolution also notes the substantial contribution of the Technical Secretariat and the Director-General to the continued development and success of the Organization.

Our basic assumption and goal this year was to ensure, as in past years, consensus approval for the draft resolution. Consensus is crucial to provide unequivocal support for of the United Nations in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. During extensive bilateral and two open-ended consultations attended by many delegations — about 50 in total — we were assured of support for this draft resolution and of readiness to join consensus on it.

Let me express gratitude to all the delegations that participated in the consultations. The consultations confirmed the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The friendly and businesslike atmosphere was another positive feature of the consultations. The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, agreed upon during the consultations and presented today, is a concrete expression of that support.

As in previous years, Poland will remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution. This sole sponsorship, supported in the consultations, will assist in ensuring

regional and political balance and broad support for the draft resolution.

We consider that the text of the draft resolution on CWC implementation is well balanced. It provides unequivocal support for the United Nations in the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention and stresses the importance of universal adherence to it.

The delegation of Poland requests the adoption of draft resolution A.C.1/60/L.31, on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, without a vote.

Mr. Bródi (Hungary): As this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor at this session, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out your important task.

I have the honour to introduce on behalf of Hungary the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction" (A/C.1/60/L.33). The second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution notes with satisfaction that there are 155 States parties to the Convention, including all of the permanent members of the Security Council.

In the third preambular paragraph, the General Assembly bears in mind its call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the implementation of the recommendations of the Review Conferences, including the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference, and to provide such information and data in conformity with standardized procedure to the Secretary-General on an annual basis and no later than 15 April.

In its fourth preambular paragraph, the draft resolution welcomes the reaffirmation made in the Final Declaration of the Fourth Review Conference that under all circumstances the use of bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons and their development, production and stockpiling are effectively prohibited under article I of the Convention.

In its fifth preambular paragraph, it recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference to hold three annual meetings of the States parties of one week's duration each year commencing in 2003 until

the Sixth Review Conference and to hold a two-week meeting of experts to prepare for each meeting of the States parties.

In its sixth preambular paragraph, it recalls also the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference that the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention would be held in Geneva in 2006 and would be preceded by a preparatory committee.

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution notes with satisfaction the increase in the number of States parties to the Convention, reaffirms the call upon all signatory States that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so without delay, and calls upon those States that have not signed the Convention to become parties thereto at an early date, thus contributing to the achievement of universal adherence to the Convention.

In its operative paragraph 2, the draft resolution welcomes the information and data provided to date, and reiterates the General Assembly's call upon all States parties to the Convention to participate in the exchange of information and data agreed to in the Final Declaration of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Operative paragraph 3 recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action in 2003 on the two topics of the adoption of necessary national measures to implement the prohibitions set forth in the Convention, including the enactment of penal legislation, and national mechanisms to establish and maintain the security and oversight of pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins; in 2004 on the two topics of enhancing international capabilities for responding to, investigating and mitigating the effects of cases of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons or suspicious outbreaks of disease, and strengthening and broadening national and international institutional efforts and existing mechanisms for the surveillance, detection, diagnosis and combating of infectious diseases affecting humans, animals and plants; and in 2005 on the topic of the content, promulgation and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists; and calls upon the States parties to the Convention to participate in its implementation.

The new operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution welcomes the significant participation of the States parties at the meetings of States parties and

meetings of experts to date and the constructive and useful exchange of information achieved, and welcomes further the discussion and the promotion of common understanding and effective action on agreed topics.

Operative paragraph 5, which is also new, recalls the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference that the Sixth Review Conference would consider the work of the meetings of States parties and meetings of experts and decide on any further action.

The draft resolution, in its new operative paragraph 6, notes that, in accordance with the decision reached at the Fifth Review Conference, the Sixth Review Conference will be held in Geneva in 2006 and the dates will be formally agreed by the preparatory committee for that Conference, which will be open to all States parties to the Convention and which will meet in Geneva during the week beginning 24 April 2006.

In its operative paragraph 7, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, including all necessary assistance to the annual meetings of the States parties and the meetings of experts, and to render the necessary assistance and provide such services as may be required for the Sixth Review Conference and the preparations for it.

Our expectation is that our draft resolution will generate broad consensus and be adopted without a vote, as has been the case in previous years.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee a draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/60/L.27), sponsored by the following delegations: Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Brunei, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Haiti, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Yemen and Zambia.

It is a matter of satisfaction to our delegations that the resolution has been gathering strength every year. Although the resolution is traditionally a non-aligned initiative, we have noted the increasing interest of other States, reflecting the unprecedented advances in space technology coming within the reach of an increasing number of developed and developing countries alike. As a result of globalization, space applications, such as in communications, broadcasting, meteorology, navigation, education and health, and environmental and crop management, have become crucial to the everyday functioning of modern society. At the same time, it is becoming increasingly clear that the line between the commercial and scientific uses of space technology and the military use of such technology is fast blurring, to the point that there is an urgent need today to ensure that space, the last frontier of humankind, is used only for non-offensive and non-belligerent purposes.

Our delegations hold the view that preventing an arms race in outer space is an easier task than attempting to control and decelerate such a race after it has begun. We cannot really afford an expensive competition in outer space while there remain so many other challenges before us, such as poverty, hunger, disease and other deprivation.

We have no doubt that the broad thrust and substance of the draft resolution reflect the thinking and wishes of people all over the world. Indeed, the unprecedented amazing photographs of recent space missions beamed across television screens around the world have once again rekindled in our hearts and minds the wonder of space exploration and strengthened popular resolve to keep the pristine world of space a peaceful arena for all humankind for all time.

The draft resolution refers to and affirms several previous multilateral agreements on this issue, including the tenth special session of the General Assembly, and urges further measures with a view to arriving at appropriate negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space. The draft resolution also refers to the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiation forum, as having the primary role in that connection, thus reflecting the hope expressed by many delegations during the general debate that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space could be re-established with an appropriate mandate in 2006.

The draft resolution also urges States conducting activities in outer space to keep the Conference on Disarmament informed of the progress on bilateral and multilateral negotiations on this matter. We appreciate in that context the valuable initiatives taken by the Russian Federation, China and Canada to press for the recommencement of work on space security issues at the Conference.

Over the years, our resolution has indeed acquired the character of a "hardy perennial", in the wise words of Dag Hammarskjöld, thus establishing important norms. We the sponsors remain mindful that the text of the draft resolution should enjoy the widest possible support as a manifestation of the collective will of the international community. Therefore, this year, too, the text is similar to that of last year, with only technical updates. It is our hope that the States members of the First Committee will support the draft resolution as usual, with the widest, if not universal support.

Mr. Prasad (India): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, in document A/C.1/60/L.51.

Resolutions on this theme, first adopted in 2002, have continued to command consensus support within both the First Committee and the General Assembly, and have also attracted a growing number of sponsors.

This year's draft resolution gives expression to the concerns of the international community and calls upon States Members of the United Nations to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It underlines that the international response to the threat needs to be inclusive, multilateral and global. That approach has been widely endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement, the G-8, the European Union and most other regional organizations.

Besides some technical updates, the draft resolution takes cognizance of the steps taken by States to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The new fifth preambular paragraph welcomes the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the new sixth preambular paragraph welcomes the adoption of amendments to strengthen the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials by the International Atomic Energy Agency. A new operative

paragraph 2 invites all Member States to consider signing and ratifying the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism to enable its early entry into force.

The draft resolution has continuing relevance as an unambiguous statement from a body that is universal and democratic — the General Assembly. The representative character of the General Assembly validates and reinforces the commitments we assume as Member States in regard to the objectives of the draft resolution.

I appeal to delegations of the First Committee to extend to this initiative an even wider measure of support than that expressed in the previous three years, through additional sponsorship of the draft resolution. That will demonstrate a larger measure of involvement of the United Nations membership on that vital issue.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus): The delegation of Belarus has the honour to introduce a draft resolution entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons: report of the Conference on Disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/60/L.10.

The draft resolution is sponsored by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Georgia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ukraine. The delegation of Belarus welcomes and appreciates the show of support for the document on the part of current and future sponsors.

The draft resolution continues the tradition of resolutions first initiated by Belarus under this agenda item 30 years ago. In its current form, the draft resolution has existed since 1996. Compared to General Assembly resolution 57/50, the current draft resolution contains technical updates in the second preambular paragraph and in operative paragraphs 4 and 6.

For many years, Belarus has devoted special attention to prohibiting the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction. That interest is not accidental. Ravaged throughout its history by a multitude of devastating wars, Belarus has always been a staunch advocate of peace and a worker for peace. The first country in the

world to renounce voluntarily the possession of its operational nuclear weapons, Belarus continues to be a committed — albeit somewhat lonely — proponent of the idea of a nuclear arms-free space in Eastern and Central Europe.

The notions of strengthening international peace and stability, reducing stockpiles of conventional weapons, and curbing the threat of weapons of mass destruction in all their forms — currently existing and theoretically possible in the future — have never been abstract for the people of Belarus and of like-minded countries.

We have always believed that efforts to eliminate existing weapons of mass destruction and to prevent the development of new types should be made in parallel. Apart from their direct destructive effects, new types of weapons of mass destruction could pose new and very serious risks. By creating an illusion of military supremacy, they could provoke their own use, which in turn might lead to the actual use of nuclear weapons.

After the end of the cold war, the international community agreed on the necessity to rule out the possibility of developing and manufacturing new types of weapons of mass destruction. Since 1990, resolutions on this item have therefore been adopted by the General Assembly without a vote.

We believe that a good way to counter the threat of the emergence of new types of weapons of mass destruction in the arsenals of States or non-State actors, including terrorists, is to create a machinery for initiating prompt multilateral response and prohibiting such types of weapons as soon as the risk of their appearance becomes imminent. The draft stipulates a specific procedure built into the existing disarmament mechanism to monitor the situation and trigger international action where required.

We heed the questioning of some Member States on how great is the need for the international community to focus on that problem. The delegation of Belarus insists that the problem and the draft resolution that puts it in the limelight remain just as relevant and topical as they were 30 years ago. This vital organizational safeguard is the least the international community can do to keep the problem of new types of weapons of mass destruction in responsible check. We call upon all Member States to give positive

consideration to the draft and we look forward to its traditional adoption without a vote.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in document A/C.1/60/L.36, under agenda item 97 (m), on behalf of the following 41 sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guinea, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Philippines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uganda, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the sponsors. The draft resolution is the traditional one that we have submitted for the past 10 years, enjoying the sponsorship of countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and many countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I do not need to dwell at length on the content of the draft resolution, as the substance is essentially the same as that of previous years. I should only like to emphasize and reiterate that nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority in the area of arms control and disarmament.

Our disappointment at the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to yield fruitful results and at the omission from the outcome document of the September 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of a section on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is clearly reflected in the draft resolution.

Once again, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. In this respect, we attach particular significance to the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament, as provided for in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, and we therefore call for the full and effective implementation of the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

This draft resolution is the most comprehensive one on nuclear disarmament. It reflects the importance of multilateralism in the field of arms control and disarmament. It calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. It urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an immediate measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapon systems. The draft resolution also calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects at an early date to identify and deal with concrete measures of disarmament.

I should like to invite the Member States to lend their overwhelming support, as before, by voting in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is submitting a new draft resolution for consideration by the First Committee entitled "Measures to promote transparency and confidence-building in outer space", which will appear as document A/C.1/60/L.30.

The opening up and use of outer space is acquiring ever greater significance in the life of humanity. The benefits of the use of space assets are becoming an ever greater part of the heritage of every country, every people and every individual. In many spheres of activity, humankind already cannot make do without the opportunities provided to us by space technology. Even more important is the challenge of ensuring access by all countries to the results of space activity and protecting space assets.

Key to resolving these challenges are the following: knowledge of the situation in outer space; transparency of the space activities of States; preventing possible encroachments on the normal operation of spacecraft; and not using space as a sphere for the deployment of weapons or for armed struggle or as a potential theatre of military operations.

Transparency and to build confidence-building measures in space activities would help in the predictability of such activities. They could become a consolidating factor for all States in respect of space. They would help us achieve practical results in the establishment of a safe and responsible approach to the

further use of outer space and would objectively weaken the motivation for the weaponization of space.

The Russian Federation's draft resolution is based on the provisions of recent General Assembly resolutions on prevention of an arms race in space and builds on those resolutions. At its heart are also the ideas set out in resolution 45/55 B, entitled "Confidence-building measures in outer space", of 4 December 1990.

We view the draft resolution as an invitation to an enlightened conversation on a problem that directly involves the security and development interests of all States, whether or not they have space potential.

We would like to draw attention to the fact that, in the interest of achieving a consensus, we have tried as hard as possible to simplify our draft resolution, limiting ourselves to an invitation to Member States to inform the Secretary-General of their views on the advisability of further developing such measures.

It is our conviction that the draft resolution meets the interests of all States, without exception. It does not call for limitations on the legitimate right of States to self-defence. Our aim is to take into consideration the

opinions of all Member States, in the interest of maintaining international peace, security and stability.

We have circulated an advance text of our draft resolution to capitals, and tomorrow, 13 October, at 2 p.m., the delegation of the Russian Federation will hold an unofficial meeting for all interested delegations to consider our draft resolution.

We call on all delegations to support the Russian draft resolution. We expect that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Chairman: Before adjourning this meeting, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Ms. Stoute (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to announce that delegations wishing to have their names appear in the final version of the document listing the membership of the First Committee should submit their lists of participants to the Secretariat by 19 October at the latest.

The Chairman: Tomorrow at 3 p.m. we will proceed with our thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.